

Our Culture Our Heritage With PREKESE Ghana Media-AKWASIDAE

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So Yesterday September 30th was Akwasidae? Is that what we heard? What is it? Who celebrates it? Why Akwasidae?

Our article culled from a site by madinghana and adapted by us attempts to answer all the above questions:

Akwasidae rituals and events are held in Ghana by the Akans every six weeks, honouring the ancestors and in the Ashanti region the Ashanti king.

Akwasidae, according to the Ashanti cultural archive records is an ornate ceremony, commemorating the date that the Ashanti Golden Stool was magically brought down from heaven. The festival therefore features a golden stool alongside the central feature of attention, the Ashanti King, who is carried on a palanquin through the procession of Ashanti people who have come to pay homage to him. A visit to Kumasi during an Akwasidae celebration is an invitation for spectacle. A celebration which parades colourful canopies and umbrellas amongst fontonfrom, kete and mpintsin drummers, dancers, horn blowers and singers who perform in honour of their ancestral spirits.

The Aday Kese Festival is a very important, albeit rare, celebration of the Ashanti's. It is held in a large open space in the capital city of Kumasi. The festival is normally well attended and embraced by Ashanti's from all walks of life.

Basically, the Aday Kese celebrations are magnified forms of Sunday Aday festivals, celebrated every six weeks in accordance with the Akan calendar which is based on a cycle of forty-two days and nine months in a year. Invariably, the last Akwasidae festival is set aside for the celebration of Aday Kese.

Aday Kese is usually held to climax celebrations of specific milestones and achievements of the Asante kingdom. It was first celebrated to mark the attainment of statehood of a newly celebrated people, in the aftermath of the Ashanti war of independence, otherwise known as the "Battle of Feyiase", which was fought against the Denkyiras between 1697 and 1699. Aday Kese, like other Akwasidae events, serves as the platform for pledging allegiance to the kingdom and to affirm loyalty to the occupant of the Golden Stool which represents the unity and embodiment of all Ashanti.

The event is marked in two phases. There are solemn private observances which are performed at the King's palace chambers by accredited members of the royal family and other functionaries. It includes rituals, aimed at cleansing the spirit of the incumbent King and the presentation of ceremonial sacrificial meal (Esq.) and drinks to ancestral spirits. Their blessing and protection guide the kingdom to prosperity.

The public celebrations take the form of a colourful durbar of chiefs and queen mothers presided over by the Asantehene. It involves the display of cherished regalia and paraphernalia accompanied by traditional drumming and dancing as well as firing of musketry amidst pomp and pageantry.

The Aday festival is a continuous demonstration of faith in the vision and heritage of the Asante Kingdom, which has existed since the introduction of the Golden Stool in 1700.

The festival is also to commemorate and re-enforce the independence of the Ashanti people and an occasion to re-affirm each state's loyalty to the confederacy instituted in the aftermath of the Ashanti war of independence fought against the Denkyiras between 1697-1699. It provides a platform for the King to meet and share his thoughts with his sub-chiefs and subjects and also reward deserving ones.

International Visitors interested in witnessing Akwasidae Festival, (Sunday Aday) should plan their visits to Ghana around the dates below. You can determine the Akwasidae dates by counting 6 weeks down the calendar from 1 Aday. For example, the Akwasidae days in 2012/13 are September 30th, November 11th, December 23rd, February 3rd, March 17th, April 28th, June 9th, July 21st and September 1st.

Community celebrations such as the above are times for cultural re-education, family reunion, strengthening of traditional bonds, demonstration of unity, sustenance of loyalty and it affords participants the opportunity to learn new history or strengthen or reinforce what they already know. To our Akan readers, we are calling on everyone to get connected with his/her roots and learn about the important parts of our culture which makes us show appreciation to those whose toil has made us who we are today. Those who fought for our communities, traditional states and nations as well as our country, there is the urgent need for us to remember them, and to harness the energy and inspiration for our national development.

Adapted from: madinghana.wordpress.com

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